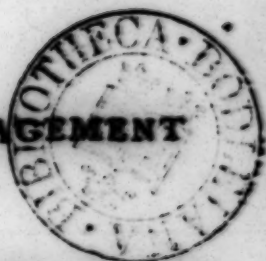


B. T. 1-683

AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
CORPORATION  
FOR THE  
*Poor of London;*

Shewing the  
NATURE, USEFULNESS, and MANAGEMENT  
OF THE  
WORK-HOUSE  
IN  
*BISHOPSGATE-STREET;*



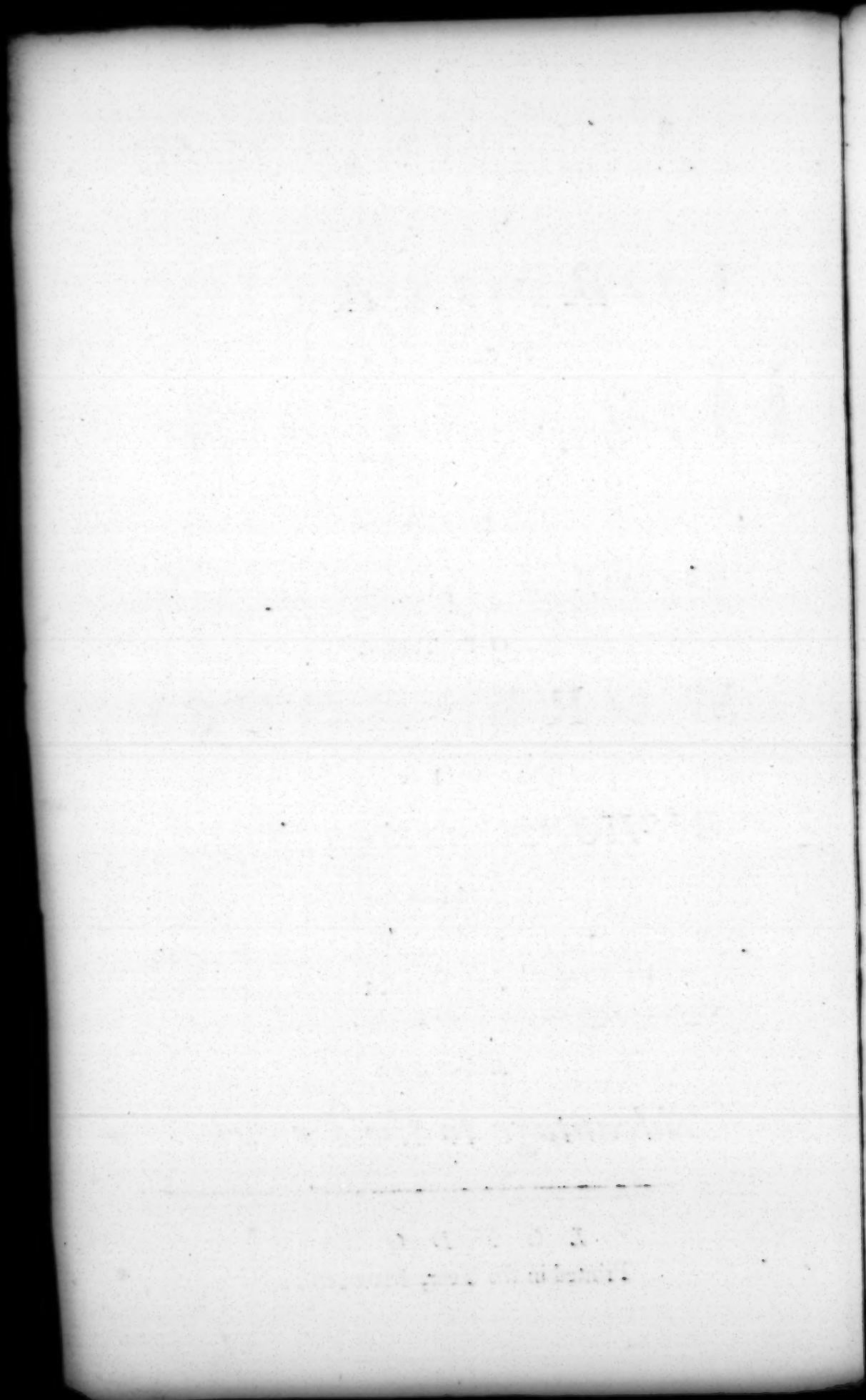
And that the  
Relieving, Educating, and Setting POOR  
CHILDREN to Work therein, is one Prin-  
cipal Design of its Institution:

And of Great  
*Advantage to the Publick.*

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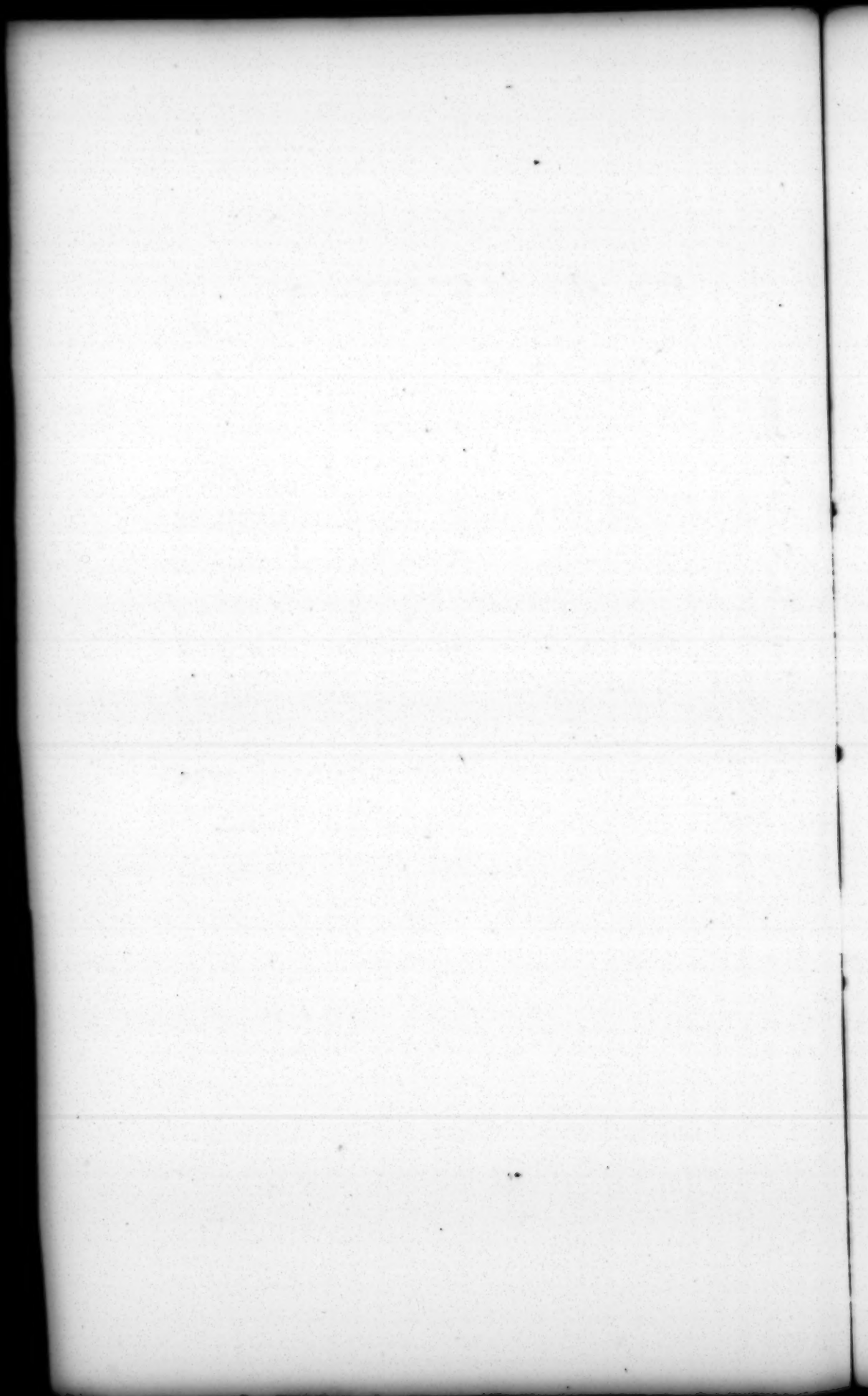
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L O N D O N:  
Printed in the Year, MDCCLIV.



## *To the* READER.

**H**AVING casually met with this Account of the *London Work-house*, published first in the Year 1713, when Application was made for the Support of that Charity; I thought it might not be improper to reprint it now, when the like Application is found necessary to be renewed; Nothing is added, except a Continuation of the Account from the Year when this was made publick, to the present Time.





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A C C O U N T

O F T H E

C O R P O R A T I O N

F O R T H E

*Poor of London, &c.*

**T**HERE having lately appear'd some Opposition to the Raising of Money towards the Support of the Work-House, especially with relation to the Poor Children therein; it is thought proper to give the Publick a Brief Account of this Establishment; to the End, that a Design so Useful and Profitable to the City, may not be neglected for want of being rightly understood.

The President and Governors for the Poor  
of London, are a Body Politick and Corporate,  
B rate,

rate, Establish'd by an Act of Parliament, made in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Years of the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, Entitled, *An Act for the better Relief of the Poor of this Kingdom.* The Occasion whereof is set forth in the Preamble; namely, The Necessity, Number, and continual Increase of the Poor, occasion'd by some Defects in the Laws, and for want of a due Provision of the Regulation, of Relief and Employment, which the Act says, did enforce many to turn incorrigible Rogues, and others to perish for Want; together with the Neglect of the Execution of the Laws for apprehending Rogues and Vagabonds, and for the Good of the *Poor.* For Remedy whereof, and *for preventing the Perishing of any Poor, whether Young or Old, for want of such Supplies as are necessary,* this Law was made, and therein it is among other Things Enacted; That there shall be a Corporation in *London*, consisting of a President, Deputy-President, and Treasurer; and that the Lord Mayor for the Time being shall be President, and the Assistants be the Aldermen, and Fifty-two other Citizens, chosen by the Common Council, which Corporation shall be called by the Name of *The President and Governors for the Poor of London.* That the Justices at their Sessions shall take an Account, *how, and how many poor People* have been Employed and set to Work in the Year last past, &c. That they

they shall have Power to receive Lands of 3000*l. per Annum* of the Gift or Devise of any Persons, and any Sums of Money, and have Power to hold Courts for the Purposes aforesaid, and to apprehend and set to Work any Rogues, Vagrants, Beggars, or Idle or Disorderly Persons within the City. And it is further Enacted, That on the Corporation's Certificate of their Want of a present Stock, or a Supply thereof for the future, and the Sum wanted, to the Common-Council, the Common-Council are by the said Act required, from Time to Time, to ascertain the same, not exceeding one Year's Rate for the Relief of the Poor, which is to be Rated and Levied in the Manner by the Act directed.

And by the said Act, the Corporation is Empower'd, from Time to Time, to make Orders and By-Laws for the *better Relieving, Regulating, and Setting the Poor to Work*, as well as By-Laws for the Apprehending and Punishing Rogues, &c. So far the Act.

The Common-Council desiring to put the said Act in Execution, Elected on the 4<sup>th</sup> of *April*, 1698, 52 Citizens to be (together with the Aldermen) Assistants, and the Lord Mayor as President, with such Assistants, Elected a Deputy President and Treasurer, and so they became a Corporation for the *Poor of London*.

And for a Foundation of so good a Work, a Supply was granted in *December* following.

In *August* 1699, the Corporation took a House in *Biskopsgate-street*, and were at great Charges in Building and Fitting the same up for a Work-house, into which they received, from the Church-Wardens of several Parishes, several poor Children, they paying 12*d.* *per Week* towards their Maintenance. In *November* 1700, they began to admit Vagrants, and in *January* following, they receiv'd, on the Keeper's side, Rogues, Vagabonds, and sturdy Beggars. And thus they by degrees proceeded; it being impracticable to execute all Parts of the Act at once, and therefore they begun, according to the Title of the Act, with the *Relief of the Poor*, and took in poor Children in the first Place, whose Necessities People are commonly most apt to pity, and most disposed to relieve: And the great Good Fruit that was likely to be produced from the Education of *the Poor*, and bringing them up to Labour, raised up many Benefactors, from whom in *October* following, the Corporation received in some Children, they giving 25*l.* for each Child, and in *December*, in the same Year, Idle and Disorderly Persons were ordered to be received on the Commitments of any two Governors. So that in a short Time after the setting up this Work-house, and  
sooner



fooner than could have been imagined, the same was regulated and adapted to the several good Ends and Purposes of the Act of Parliament. And this Management was accordingly approved by the Common-Council, and a Second Supply was granted in 1702, and at the General Quarter Sessions in *January* 1702, the several Orders, touching the Matters aforesaid, were confirmed, and made By-Laws. But afterwards, in *November* 1708. it was ordered, That no Child, although born within the City of *London*, and Liberties thereof, should be received from any Benefactor, giving a less Sum than *Fifty* Pounds ; yet that the Charity might not be too strictly confined, it was further ordered, that any Benefactor giving *Seventy* Pounds, might put in a Child from what Place he thought fit ; to the Intent that the Children which should be so received, might not be any Charge, but an Advantage to the House. And in *April* 1710, it was ordered that the *12d. per Week*, before paid for Parish-Children, should be taken off, and not be demanded after the *1st* of *May* following ; both which last Orders, as also an Order that no Child should be taken in from the Executors of any Benefactor, unless a Clause were inserted in the Will of such Benefactor, for that purpose, have been since made into By-Laws, confirmed at the Sessions, and strictly observed.

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The House is divided into Two Parts, one Part is called the *Steward's Side*, where *poor Children* are taken in from Benefactors giving 50*l.* or 70*l.* as before mentioned, and these Children are by that Means, and their Labour, rather a Profit than Charge to the House; and on this side are also taken in such Children as are a Charge to the several Parishes of this City and Liberties to which they belong. And all these Children are religiously educated, according to the Church of *England*, and are employed in Spinning-Wool, Flax, Sewing, or Knitting; they are Dieted and Cloathed, and duly taken Care of in Sickness. They are taught to Read, Write and Cast-Accompts, whereby they are qualified for Services and honest ways of Livelihood, and at their going out they have a Suit of Cloaths, or 20*s.* But Freemens Children have a larger Allowance out of a Benefaction directed to be appropriated to that purpose.

And the other part of the Work-House is called the *Keeper's Side*, where Vagabonds, Beggars, Pilfering and other Vagrants, Leud, Idle, and Disorderly Persons, (duly committed) have such Relief as is proper for them, and are employed in Beating Hemp, Picking Oakum, or washing Linnen. And these Vagrants and Beggars, &c. after they have been some Time confined to hard Labour, and been taught thereby

thereby how to maintain themselves honestly, are sent to their respective Settlements as the Law directs. So that from *Easter* 1700 to *Easter* 1713, the number of Vagrants, Beggars, &c. discharged, is 5555, during which Time, there died 54, and at *Easter* last there remained 40.

The Number of Children put out Apprentices during the said Time, is 1243, during which Time there died 118, and at *Easter* 1713, there remained 279.

The Children, and all others in the Work-House, are required to attend Divine Service Morning and Evening, which is regularly and duly performed in a convenient Place of the House, set apart for that purpose. But it would take up more room than can be spared in a brief Account, to set down particularly the Orders relating to the Christian Education of the Children, and how they are Cloathed, Fed and Taught, and brought up to Write, and the exact Government and Discipline of the House, which afford together one of the most pleasing and agreeable Sight, that a Man can behold, and than which, nothing of this Nature can tend to Inspire a Man with more Humanity and Love, or more provoke him to speak well of, and assist the Work by all Means in his Power. The great Charity of the Work, and  
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the Good of which it is productive in all its Parts to the Publick, has encouraged the Common-Council, from Time to Time, as there has been Occasion, readily to comply with the said Act of Parliament, and to Levy Money for its Support. But the Money so raised could not have brought the Work to that degree of Perfection and Usefulness, unless it had been assisted with many private and great Charities, which have amounted to about 15000*l.* The Yearly Charge of the said House, being about 2400*l. per Annum*, over and beyond what the Children earn, and over and above their Estate, which, besides the House itself, amounts to no more than 220*l. per Annum*. This Estate was given purely with regard to the poor Children. And the great and constant Care and Application of the Governors, and their wise and prudent Management thereof, and of all the Branches of this Charity, have effectually answered the Ends and Design of it; which cannot be better evinced and demonstrated, than by briefly setting forth the Substance of the Reports of several Committees appointed by the Common-Council which relate thereto, and were made by them from Time to Time to the Common Council, which are as follow, viz.

AUGUST 26th, 1702. *The Committee Report, they have examined the Management of the Money formerly advanced, and do find that the same*



same hath been managed with the utmost Care, Application, and Frugality, and that there would have been an Occasion for a Supply long since, but for many considerable Charities.

**APRIL 30th, 1706.** The Committee Report, the Corporation have taken great Care and Pains in carying on the Work, and have kept the Accounts of all the Receipts and Payments very fair and just, an Abstract whereof they then laid before the Common Council.

**MARCH 22d, 1708.** The Committee say, they have viewed the several Appartments, and the Method used in employing the Children and others committed there to Work, according to their several Capacities and Abilities, and do well approve of the same.

**JUNE 22d, 1710.** The Committee Report, they have Inspected the Accounts, and enquired how the Moneys, already raised for the Use of the Poor, have been expended, and are very well satisfied with the great Frugality of the President and Governors; that they have also inspected the Government of the Corporation, and their Method of employing and setting to Work those under their Care, as an Hospital for Relief of necessitous poor Children sent from several Parishes, and as a Work-House for the Correction  
C and

*and Punishment of Rogues, &c. And well approve of the same.*

NOVEMBER, 1712. *The Committee Report they have inspected the Management of the President and Governours, for the Poor, and enquired how the Moneys last granted for the Use of the Poor have been expended, and are well satisfied with their Frugality in Disposal of the same.*

If any thing need to be added to shew the Weight these Reports ought to have with all good Citizens; it may be truly said, they were from Time to Time made by such as were inferior to none in Abilities and Skill in publick Business, as well as in Integrity.

Thus much is thought fit to be said, not only with respect to the Justice due to the Governours, but also with respect to the Honour and Regard that is due to the Common-Council, who have all along, from Time to Time, had so just and laudable a Concern for the Discharge of the Trust reposed in them by their Fellow-Citizens, as not to suffer any new Sum of Money to be raised on them, before they have seen how the former Moneys granted have been applied.

The Charge of the Poor has been complained of for many Ages, and in the said Act, the same  
is



is said to be very great, and exceeding burthensome, and the Parliament thought the erecting Corporations for their Relief and Employment, a necessary Means for Remedy thereof, and in all likelihood, future Ages will not find a better. We have seen by the Care of the City in putting the said Act in Execution, that in these few Years 5555 Vagabonds, Common Beggars, Pilfering and other Vagrants, Lend, Idle, and disorderly Persons, have been punished with hard Labour. And how great and lasting a Benefit and Advantage this hath, and must be, not only to the Persons themselves, and to their Relations, but also to the Publick, let any Intelligent Citizen judge. And if this part of the Design be so necessary and useful, how much more Excellent and more Useful and Beneficial must be the other Part of the Design of the Work-House which according to the said Act, is *for a due Provision of Relief and Employment of Poor Children, and to prevent their Perishing for Want.* Add to this, the inestimable Benefit of their being nurtured and brought up in a Religious Education, and taught to Work as soon as they are able, whereby they at present help to support themselves, and whereby they are fitted for honest Trades and Services, and are not only kept from Perishing for Want, but from Pilfering, and turning Vagabonds, and incorrigible Rogues, and made useful Members of the Community; and great must needs have been the Advantage

of having above 1000 poor necessitous Children so brought up, and put out into the World. And suppose they had been otherwise kept from perishing for Want, yet great would have been the Loss of their honest Labour and Industry, at least to themselves; and greater would have been the Evil, if they had followed the wicked Practices their miserable Condition exposed them to: So that the real Truth of the Matter seems to be this, That if the Poor are not taken in to one side of the House, when they are young, it's great odds but they will deserve to be sent to the other, when they are grown up.

It hath been objected, That the Act of Parliament, by which this Work-House is founded, doth restrain and limit the Care and Charity to Vagrants and sturdy Beggars, so that the *Keeper's Side* is the only legal Establishment; and the *Steward's Side*, where the poor Children are, is not warranted by Law. Now to this it may readily be answered by any that will please to look into the Act itself, as follows:

The Preamble of the Act shews, *that the Relieving, Employing, and Setting the Poor of the City to Work, was the Principal Design of it. The Work-House in the Act, is expressed to be erected for redress of the Mischiefs relating to the Poor. An Account is to be taken at Sessions, how, and how many poor People have been employed*

ployed and set to Work therein. The Name of the Corporation is, the President and Governors for the **Poor**. The Corporation (besides Goods and Chattels without Limitation) may receive Lands to the Value of 3000l. per Annum; which shews it to be designed for more than Rogues and Beggars. Further, the President and Governors are to make By-Laws for Relieving, Regulating, and **setting the Poor to work**, as well as By-Laws for apprehending, and punishing Rogues, &c. By all this it appears evident, that the Principal Design of this Act of the 13th. and 14th. of Car. II. was to employ the **Poor** pursuant to the Statute of the 43d of Eliz. Ch. 2d. whereby the Church-Wardens, &c. are directed to take Order for setting to work (among others) the Children of such Parents who should not be thought able to keep and maintain them——And the Power to take in Vagrants, and employ them, is Additional, to meet with another Mischief mentioned in the Act.

There are others who have objected against the Work-House's taking in any Parish-Children; because, say they, the Parishes can maintain them cheaper than the Work-House. This Matter also deserves to be considered. There are usually in the Work-House, at least 200 Parish-Children; supposing then, the Maintenance and Education of each Child costs 8l. a Year, that Charge will amount to 1600l. Yearly;



Yearly; the Residue of what has been Levied and Received, since erecting the said Corporation, (which is upwards of 14 Years) including the 12*d.* *per Week* to May 1710. amounts to near 10000*l.* And that Sum has been applied in the following manner; *viz.* Some part towards Building the Work-House; other Part has defrayed the necessary Charges of the Keeper's Side, where large Sums have been expended in Apprehending and Keeping Vagrants, Beggars, Idle and Disorderly Persons, (the Number of which amounts to no less than 5555, who have been taken up, set to Work, and discharged, as aforesaid,) and the residue has paid Servants Wages, Physick, and many other incident Charges.

Well, but say they who object, yet we can keep our Children cheaper, *viz.* for 5*l.* *per Annum* each Child, whereas those in the Work-House cost 8*l.* But pray how is that 5*l.* computed? Why it must be owned, it costs them 5*l.* a Child one with another, without the Church-Wardens charge of visiting them, and diverse other Expences which are ordinarily brought to Account under that Head, besides Physick and Clothing, which when they are all reckoned, will hardly fall short of 8*l.* a Child. But suppose it should fall short 20*s.* and that is the most, will those who Object, say that what they so allow the poor Children is sufficient, or  
does

does indeed wholly support or keep them? No it is manifestly otherwise, and in fact, such Children are often sent a Begging, and found Pilfering to supply their Necessities, and what is likely to be the End of many of them, one cannot but dread to think of.

And whereas it hath been objected, that these Children, if returned to their respective Parishes, might be taken into the Charity-Schools, it is easily answered, that there is never wanting a sufficient Number of other Children for those Schools; so that the so much applauded Charity of educating poor Children, will be hereby considerably lessened in the whole; and tho' the Education in Charity-Schools is highly beneficial, and of excellent Service to the Publick, yet it will not be to their disparagement to say, that in some respects the Preference may be given to the Education afforded in this Work-House, by reason of the constant Employment, and exact Discipline continually observed therein, not only in School-Hours, but at other Times. So that if this Side of the Work-House be suffered to drop, there will in Truth be a Diminution of Charity as to near 300 Children, who perhaps are under the best Regulation of any in the Kingdom.

Again, Do Gentlemen, who object as aforesaid, pretend they can maintain their Children,  
and



and educate them as well for what they pay for them, as the Work-House does? No, they give that Matter wholly up. They don't pretend to maintain and bring up their Children so well, nor to teach them to read, or to educate them in religious Principles according to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*; and yet this is the only probable Way to keep such of them, as prove religiously disposed, from wicked Principles, and more wicked Practices. Do these Gentlemen bring up and educate their Parish Children in any manner of Order, or under any manner of Discipline like this? No, they don't pretend to do so. Do they pretend to inure them to Labour, or send them to Work before they are put out? No such matter; they are commonly, when put out, rude and untractable, and therefore few will take them, who want not the Money usually given with them.

Again, is Labour and Industry in the Education of Children of no use? These Gentlemen who so object cannot but say they are; and must own, most of their Estates and Riches were got (by the Blessing of God) on their honest Industry and Application to Business. Is it then consistent for them, or any good Citizens, to avow, as they in effect do, that Labour and Industry are nothing worth, or not worth poor Childrens Learning, altho' they  
own

own they have nothing but their Labour to live by? And it is often found, that a Citizen of a laborious working Trade, will rather take a Child who has been educated in the Work-House, and inured to Labour, without any Money, than take any other Parish-Child with 4 or 5*l.*

Besides, it may be proper to consider, what hath been the chief Motive to the many Charities the Work-House hath received. Let any one examine that Fact, and he will find *the Children* have been the Great and Chief Occasion of them; and therefore these *Children* have been ordered to go in Procession to the *Spittle Sermons* yearly at *Easter* for that purpose, and the Account of them read in the Church by the Bishop or Minister officiating, by which, no doubt, many have been stirred up to contribute to this House, and the Contributions have been considerable for the Time, they amounting to about 15000*l.* and part thereof is appropriated particularly to their use. The *Children* indeed (and the promising Fruits of their religious and useful Education) have, more than any thing else, engaged the Labour, Care and Time of the Governours. The Hopes and Desires of Keeping poor Destitute (but yet Innocent) Children from the Wants and Miseries those on the other side of the House have been brought to, and suffer for want of such  
D Education,

Education, have prevailed on and encouraged the Governours to attend the Business of the Work-House with such Diligence. And no one can say or think, that the Business of the House would have been so well attended, if the Correction and setting to work the Rogues, Vagabonds, &c. had been *all* their Business; that indeed is part of the Design, and necessary to be done; but the Thought of keeping poor Children from being such Vagabonds, &c. is what has given *Life* to the whole Design.

There are now about 200 Parish-Children in the Work-House, who give this Life and Spirit to the Charity; and can it enter into the Heart and Will of any good Citizen, to turn them out a drift, to abandon them to all Idleness, Misery, and Want in this World, and to take from them their Religious Education, the very Bread of the Life to come? Let any Citizen or good-natured Man put himself in the Place of one of the Parents of these Children, or put his own Children in these Children's Case, and then he will easily see how severe and rigorous an Act it would be, to turn these poor Children out, and how good and pleasing a Thing it will be, both in the Sight of God and Man, to contribute all his Endeavours towards raising Money, as *the Act* requires, for continuing them; in doing which, according to the Rules of the Gospel, they may hope for  
the



the Reward mentioned in that Sentence of our Saviour, which will be pronounced on those at the last Day; who have *Fed the Hungry*, and *given the Thirsty Drink*, *taken in the Stranger*, and *Cloathed the Naked*, &c.

SINCE the first publishing the foregoing Account, there has been Application made to the Common-Council of the City of *London*, for a further Supply, which has been granted; as in the Year 1720, the Sum of 2443*l.* 14*s.*

In the Year 1731 a further Supply was requested, and the Committee reported, that on Examination we are very well satisfied of the good Management of the said President and Governours, in the Disposal of the Money formerly granted, and are of Opinion they should have a further Supply of 2443*l.* 14*s.*—which was accordingly granted.

Since the Year 1713, to *Lady-day* 1744, the Number of Children put out Apprentices is 1504; during which Time there have died 204; and at *Easter* 1744 there remained 111.

The Number of Vagrants, Beggars, &c. discharged since *Lady-day* 1713 to *Lady-day* 1744, is 14487, during which time there died 167 ;  
remained

remained at *Lady-day* 1744, 16. Which Work could not be carried on without the Assistance of private Benefactions, which have amounted to about 18000 Pounds.

F I N I S.

